

Grade:

25

Course:

B320 B

No

3

Critique of Term Project for Fr. Herbert Ryan, S.J.

Format:

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Adequate

Unsatisfactory

Journal of Research:

1. Procedure

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Adequate

Unsatisfactory

2. Progressive Limitation of Topic

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Adequate

Unsatisfactory

3. Final Statement of Research Problem

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Adequate

Unsatisfactory

Bibliography:

1. Final Search Bibliography

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Adequate

Unsatisfactory

2. Selection of Initial Readings from Search Bibliography

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Adequate

Unsatisfactory

3. Projected Further Readings to Refine Research Problem

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Adequate

Unsatisfactory

Further Comment:

*Joe This is fine work - shows  
real talent for research and perseverance!  
(plus knowing a famous professor of Classics!)  
Excellent*

ST. AMBROSE: THE IMPECCABLE  
ARCHBISHOP OF MILAN

by

Joseph B. Bustillos

A Paper Submitted to Father Hebert J. Ryan, S. J.,  
of the Religious Studies Department  
of Loyola Marymount University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
RS 320B

December 2

1977

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November 21

Tonight I went to the Charles Von der Ahe Library here at Loyola Marymount University to do some research on some poor unsuspecting topic. An acquaintance suggested that I research the Life of St. Jerome. I took him up on his advice. I, therefore, proceeded to skim over the article on St. Jerome in the New Catholic Encyclopedia. I was left unimpressed.

I then turned to an article on the Church Fathers in the NCE. But alas, it was nearing the stroke of eleven. Time was not on my side this night. I thought it wise in this situation to xerox the article that I may read it later at my own leisurely pace. But again foul-play impeded my progress. In this beautiful furnished multi-million dollar learning and resource facility not one of the five xerox machines were functioning. *Typical!!*

The night librarian said, "Better luck next time."

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November 22

Today I once again made my way to the Charles Von der Ahe Library. This time my opponent was not time but the illusive New Catholic Encyclopedia. After asking many library workers and an equal number of unshelved books I saw that my quest for the lost NCE (volume VI) was futile. I therefore sought the assistance of the Catholic Encyclopedia (dated 1913). The eighteen page article in volume six set about to establish the Church's position that the writings of the Church Fathers are reliable sources or foundations for present doctrines.

After a few moments of reflection (approximately an hour or so) and a little inspirational music (provided by an artistic six-stringed angel more commonly known as the guitar, played by yours truly) I decided to look into the life of my friend and yours, St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan.



After extensively explaining (perhaps justifying, Cf. Matt.23:9) the term "Father" and the development of the succession of appeals in theological matters the article devotes one small (and I mean small) paragraph to the Archbishop of Milan. The paragraph opens by saying, "The greatest of the opponents of Arianism in the West is St. Ambrose (d.397). His sanctity and his great-actions make him one of the most imposing figures in the patristic period." (CE,vi,p.8) Obviously St. Ambrose was so imposing that the writers of this article saw no need in saying anything else about the man. Luckily I had decided to investigate St. Ambrose's life before reading this article. He might have ended up like St. Jerome.

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November 23

Again the volumes of the New Catholic Encyclopedia here at Loyola Marymount University were far and few to be seen. I once more resorted to the Catholic Encyclopedia (1913) volume I 'St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.' I successfully xeroxed the article and then set out to find Frederick Dudden's famous book: "The Life and Times of St. Ambrose." I call the book famous because it is so popular here at Loyola that it is no where to be found. Oh well, I have a bus to catch and some turkey to eat. It is going to be a long weekend. Happy Thanksgiving!!

\*\*\*\*\*

November 26

Today I went to the library at the University of California at Irvine. I went primarily to obtain more bibliographical information. I did not have much time to spend there so I proceeded to read an article on St. Ambrose in a book called The Encyclopedia of Catholic Saints (December). Like many of the collections of saint's lives this book was not out to portray scientifically

established historical evidence. The account was comparable to The Little Flowers of St. Francis.

The article on St. Ambrose was a pious little story about the fortitude of Ambrose's character even as a young lad when his father died. The authors were sure to present the picture of Ambrose as a very hard-working student. At a young age he became "Perfect of Milan," i.e., the police chief. As Perfect of Milan he was responsible for the peaceful environment of the city.

In performing this duty he ended up one day in midst of a local election that might prove to be violent. The Arian Bishop Auxentius had died and it was necessary to elect a successor. When he attempted to mediate, he was suddenly elected bishop by both parties. Tradition has it that it was the voice of a young child crying, "Ambrose, bishop!!" that got the saint into the episcopal office. Despite his energetic resistance, he had not so much as been baptized, the will of the people was carried out and eight days after his baptism he was ordained bishop. Tradition says that the date was December 7, 374.

One final note on this article is a statement that caught me off guard. In discussing why Ambrose had not yet been baptized the authors state that one can be a christian without being baptized. They say that "in those days" baptism was really a requirement to enter the community of the Church. That sounded a little odd to me. But then, that is the way it is with many books of this nature.

*yes - this  
is wild,  
Joe.*

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November 27

This weekend was not quite as long as I hoped. Today I read the article on Ambrose that I had xeroxed from the Catholic Encyclopedia the previous Wednesday. While it was far more detailed (perhaps reliable) concerning



Ambrose's life, the narrative still possessed a bit of the "floweriness" found in the previous article.

This article was very swift to assert, "He was one of the most illustrious Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and fitly chosen, together with St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom and St. Athanasius, to uphold the venerable Chair of the Prince of the Apostles in the tribune of St. Peter's at Rome." (CE,i,p383). All hail to Catholic Piety!! (I included that excerpt in this journal because I thought that it was a very interesting way for the authors of this particular article to begin their report).

At the time of the saint's birth his father, likewise named Ambrosius, was Prefect of Gallia, and as such ruled the present lands of France, Britain, and Spain, together with Tingitana in Africa. Needless to say it was one of the four great prefectures of the Empire, and the highest office that could be held by a subject. According to tradition St. Ambrose was born in Trier, a principle city of the province. Young Ambrose was the youngest of three children. There was about ten years between himself and his older sister, Marcellina, who became a nun. His older brother, Satyrus, upon the unexpected appointment of Ambrose to the episcopate, resigned a prefecture in order to live with him and relieve him from temporal cares. When their father died, in about 354, the whole family moved back to the eternal city, Rome. (The saint's mother goes on unnamed in all the sources that I've read, she is however proclaimed as being a "saintly and accomplished widow" CE,i,p.384.)

St. Ambrose studied in the field of law. He rapidly climbed up the latter to the position of consular governor of Liguria and Emilia, which is the position that he held when he entered the basilica of Milan to calm the crowd.

It was but natural that a bishop so high-minded, so kind to the poor, so

completely devoting his great gifts to the service of the Church and of humanity, should soon win the enthusiastic love of his people. The very fact that he was overwhelmingly elected to the office should show that he was respected by both parties. Rarely, if ever, has a Christian bishop been so universally popular, in the best sense of that much abused term, as Ambrose of Milan. This popularity, conjoined with his intrepidity, was the secret of his success in routing enthroned iniquity. The heretical Empress Justina and her barbarian advisers would many a time fain have silenced him by exile or assassination, but, like Herod in the case of the Baptist, they "feared the multitude." Justina had prudently concealed her Arian views during the lifetime of her orthodox husband, but when he died in 375, abetted by a powerful and mainly Gothic faction at court, proclaimed her determination to rear her child in that heresy, and once more attempt to Arianize the West.

The question at issue was the surrender of one of the basilicas to the Arian for public worship. Throughout the long struggle Ambrose displayed in an eminent degree all the qualities of a great leader. His intrepidity in the moments of personal danger was equalled only by his admirable moderation; for, at certain critical stages of the drama one word from him would have hurled the Empress and her son from their throne. That word was never spoken.

The narrative goes on to talk about the "most remarkable episodes in the history of the Church": the public penance inflicted by the Bishop and submitted to by the Emperor Theodosius. Tradition has it that St. Ambrose stopped the Emperor at the porch of the church and publicly upbraided and humiliated him. This, however, is shown by modern criticism to be an exaggeration. The emergency called into action every episcopal virtue. When the news reached Milan that the seditious Thessalonians had killed the Emperor's officials, Ambrose and the council of bishops, over which he happened to presiding

at the time, made an apparently successful appeal to the clemency of Theodosius. Great was their horror, when, shortly after, Theodosius, yielding to the suggestions of Rufinus and other courtiers, ordered an indiscriminate massacre of the citizens, in which seven thousand perished. In order to avoid meeting the blood-stained monarch or saying Mass in his presence, and, moreover, to give him time to ponder the enormity of a deed so foreign to his character, the Saint, pleading ill-health, and sensible that he exposed himself to the charge of cowardice, retired to the country, whence he sent a noble letter "written with my own hand, that thou alone mayst read it," exhorting the Emperor to repair his crime by an exemplary penance. With "religious humility," says St. Augustine (De Civ. Dei., V, xxvi), Theodosius submitted; "and, being laid hold of by the discipline of the Church, did penance in such a way that the sight of his imperial loftiness prostrated made the people who were interceding for him weep more that the consciousness of offence had made them fear it when enraged." "Stripping himself of every emblem of royalty", says Ambrose in his funeral oration (c. 34) "he publicly in church bewailed his sin. That public penance, which private individuals shrink from, and Emperor was not ashamed to perform; nor was there afterwards a day on which he did not grieve for his mistake." This plain narrative, without theatrical setting, is much more honourable both to the Bishop and his sovereign.

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November 28

Tonight I went back Charles Von der Ahe Library to do some additional research on good ol' Ambrose. I decided to look into the articles on Ambrose in several secular encyclopedias to make sure of the objectivity of the article in the Catholic Encyclopedia. The first encyclopedia that I read was the New Encyclopedia Britannica (vol. I), 'St. Ambrose.' This



article was a basic re-hash of all the information that I had received from the article in the CE. There was one slight twist, though in the NEB.

Ambrose was portrayed as almost a secular statesman.

An imperial court frequently sat in Milan. In confrontations with this court, Ambrose showed a directness that combined the republican ideal of the prerogatives of a Roman senator with a sinister vein of demagoguery.  
(NEB, i, p. 657)

Among the accomplishments of St. Ambrose the NEB lists: "In 384 he secured rejection of an appeal for tolerance by pagan members of Roman Senate, whose spokesman, Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, was his relative (Letters 17-18)", in 385-6 he refused to surrender a church to the Arians for public worship, in 388 he rebuked Theodosius I for punishing a bishop who burned a synagogue, and then there is the massacre of the Thessalonians in 390. As a parting note the article asserts that Ambrose philosophically was a Neoplatonist.

I then proceeded to read an article on Ambrose out of the Encyclopedia Americana. The one original statement made in this selection is, "The Emperor is within the Church, not above the Church." The EA uses this quotation to support the statement that Ambrose is the fore-runner of Medieval philosophy on the relationship of Church and State.

The last encyclopedia that I looked into was Collier's Encyclopedia (vol. I, all three encyclopedias were volume I). Collier offered absolutely nothing that the other encyclopedias did not likewise have.

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November 29, & 30

Tonight I went to the Charles Von der Ahe Library in search of Frederick Dudden's lost book entitled, The Life and Times of St. Ambrose and found it still missing. All was not lost however, for I happened to discover a book that goes by the title The Later Christian Fathers (ed. and

trans. by Henry Bettenson). I likewise had the wonderful fortune to come upon the world renowned book, Patrology by Berthold Altaner ( it was loaned to me by the equally famous Rev. J.J. O'Neill, S.J.). *good man !!*

In the Patrology the basic historical data that has already been discussed in this journal is presented. Altaner then proceeds very systematically to present the writings of St. Ambrose. He says that the writings of St. Ambrose can be divided into six sections, each of which shall be individually treated. The first section is Ambrose's Exegetical writings. He follows the Jew Philo and Origen in assuming the threefold sense of Scripture (v. supra 40); as a preacher he favors the moralizing and allegorizing interpretation. He has only treated O.T. books or texts, with the exception of the commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke.

The second section of books is concerning his Moral-ascetical writings. He presents the first comprehensive thesis on Christian ethics in his book De Officiis ministrorum, which was written after 386. He also wrote several books on the virtue of celibacy. *is a dunny.*

The third section of books deals with his Dogmatic writings. He defends the divinity of the Son against the Arians in five books De fide ad Gratianum (381). The three books De Spiritu Sancto were also written at the request of Emperor Gratian to whom they are dedicated. De incarnationis dominicae sacramento (EP 1246/74, 1280/9) is also directed against Arianism. He also wrote several books on baptism, eucharist, and penance.

The fourth and fifth sections of St. Ambrose's writings are orations, letters and liturgical hymns. The following orations have been preserved: Two funeral orations on the death of his brother Satyrus, an oration on the occasion of the funeral of the murdered Emperor Valentinian II, an oration at the obsequies of the Emperor Theodosius I and a Sermo contra Auxentium de

basilicis tradendis when Valentinian II had ordered the Milan churches to be given over to the Arians. The letters that were published by the archbishop of Milan himself have been preserved only in an incomplete state. St. Ambrose was not only a writer but also a composer of hymns. From the seventh century church hymns have been called Ambrosian, hence those preserved under his name are not always his works.

The sixth and final section is entitled Spurious writings according to Altaner. Honestly I personally do not know why Altaner included this section in his study on St. Ambrose. I do suppose that this section is for those writings attributed to the saint that do not fit in any other section.

Henry Bettenson's book The Later Christian Fathers is a selection from the writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great. In his section on St. Ambrose he first presents the basic life of the saint. He then gives a few excerpts from the writings of St. Ambrose. The writings are classified as follows: I) Man and Sin, II) The Person Of Christ, III) The Work of Christ, IV) The Trinity, V) The Baptismal Rite, VI) The Eucharist.

After reading these selections I was impressed by two thoughts. The first thought dealt with St. Ambrose's feelings in regards to Original Sin.

We all sinned in the first man, and by natural inheritance an inheritance of guilt has been transferred from one man to all....Adam was in each one of us: for in him human nature sinned, because through one man sin passed over into all. (apol. Dav. 2.12, 71)

Adam existed; and in him we all existed: Adam perished, and in him all perished. (in ev. Luc. 7.234)

I fell in Adam; I was expelled from paradise in Adam: I died in Adam. How can God recall me unless it is in Adam that he finds me? So that I am justified in Christ, as I become subject to guilt, in debt to death, in Adam. (de excess. frat. Sat. 2.6)

How can one who is by nature a sinner be condemned for that which he was born as. That is as bad as condemning a man for being born into a royal



family or for being black! How can God do this?

The second thought that came to mind was concerning the appearance of the term "priest" in St. Ambrose's writings. At what stage the liturgical development at that time? The very word "priest" denotes sacrifice, was the liturgical service at that time considered a memorial "sacrifice"?

To answer the first inquiry I realize that all of our sins are acquitted by the atoning death of Jesus on the cross. Therefore if we have faith and "doubt not" we shall not be condemned.

The second question is not that easy to answer. Therefore, if I <sup>were</sup> called upon to write a term project with the research that I have done and the information available to me I would write about the liturgical service as a sacrifice.

We have seen the High Priest coming to us; we have seen and heard him offering his blood for us. We priests follow, as well as we can, so that we may offer sacrifice for the people. Though we claim no merit we are to be honoured in the sacrifice; for, although Christ is not now visibly offered, yet he is himself offered on the earth when the body of Christ is offered. Moreover, it is made clear that he himself offers in us, since it is his words which sanctify the sacrifice which is offered. (in Ps.38.25)

*Excellent*